

Morgantown Green Team: Minutes of November 3, 2014 Meeting

Attending: Lisa Lagana (chair), Chelsi Baker (City of Morgantown Communications Director), Ella Belling, Michelle Sloane, Pam Cubberly, and Jim Kotcon

- I. **Old Business.** The Public Service Commission decided to postpone hearings on Mon Power/First Energy rate increases, but public comment can be submitted right up to when any decision will be made. They are still negotiating a settlement, trying to get an agreement. The rate increase could be as much as 17% across West Virginia.
- II. **New City Communications Director.** Lisa introduced the City of Morgantown's new Communications Director, Chelsi Baker (cbaker@cityofmorgantown.org), who recently replaced Susan Sullivan. She started two weeks ago so is spending much of her time learning about her job and the city. She has a background in journalism and photography and most recently worked for a Fairmont newspaper, covering education and civil rights. Once she gets familiar with her new job, she said she looked forward to find ways of supporting the Green Team through city communications.

Chelsi noted that she intended to focus initially on three aspects of her job: (1) connecting with various groups within the city and members of the public to promote their involvement in city affairs and activities; (2) improve/enhance use of social media by the city; and (3) promote transparency of city information, particularly through city newsletters and other vehicles. She agreed to take Susan Sullivan's pace as co-moderator of the Green Morgantown Facebook Group in order to advise on city policy and serve as our link with the city manager and other city official, should any question arise on content.

Action: Pam Cubberly will add Chelsi Baker to the Green Team's media list and arrange for her to take Susan Sullivan's place as co-moderator of the Green Morgantown Facebook Group.

- III. **Retiring Green Team's website.** Lisa asked the team about how handled the Green Team's website, which has not been updated in a long while and probably should be retired, as the city has a "Green Morgantown" tab on its site in which the Green Team has a page, which Trevor Lloyd on the team is developing and managing. Chris van Dyke had been the manager of the separate Green Team website. All agreed that he should be contacted to discuss transfer of any information on that site that should be saved for team use and possibly posting on the city site.

Action: Lisa will contact Chris Van Dyke to discuss the above.

- IV. **Change of job for Lisa Lagana.** Lisa announced that she had been hired as the new program coordinator for the West Virginia Small Farm Center, part of the West Virginia Cooperative Extension Service that assists small farmers with both business and farming aspects of their operations. She noted that she did not expect her new job to affect her interim leadership of the Green Team.
- V. **Possible change of week in month for Green Team meetings.** Pam Cubberly briefly asked members whether others also faced difficulties making Green Team meetings during the first week of the month, noting that several holidays made meeting on a first Monday more difficult (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. Might it be possible to meet on

the second or perhaps third Monday of the month? It was agreed to stay with Monday night for team meetings.

Action: It was decided to defer to the city liaison, Trevor Lloyd, on whether such a change was possible, particularly if he would still be able to make meetings.

VI. Business Recycling Project Update. The bulk of the meeting focused on a report by Michelle Sloane, the Green Team's business recycling intern who is working with Trevor Lloyd to explore possibilities for encouraging stakeholders to move forward to expand some kind of recycling by businesses, possibly through a pilot project. Michelle is working with Trevor Lloyd as well as another intern, Andrew DiPietrantonio to promote business recycling in the city.

Michelle reported that she has been busy arranging meetings and meeting with business owners (e.g., Black Bear, Panera, Starbuck's, etc.) to get their perspectives on recycling and find out what they may already be doing. She was to meet with a representative of Republic the following week, to be attended also by city official Tom Arnold who was instrumental in Morgantown's single-stream recycling in residential area. She has met with several WVU professors as well, including Susan Hunter on focus groups and Allen Collins on community recycling. She also met with Jess Maple, director of the Mon County Solid Waste Authority. Apparently, the authority is facing some financial issues, which has led to a reduction of staff, as they have received reduced funding from the county, stopped receiving drop-offs from major donors, and are paying rent on their new facility whereas in the previous location they did not. It was suggested that if Republic was not responsive on efforts to increase business recycling, the authority could take up the slack.

The team then discussed the broad issues and obstacles preventing business recycling: including difficulties in finding drop-off points for businesses, how to provide them with a financial incentive to make the effort to recycle, and how to encourage pickup by the city contractor at businesses and student apartments.

The team asked Michelle how the team could support their efforts. She mentioned that she would like to pursue (1) getting more information on related laws; (2) look at the Republic contract which Tom Arnold could provide; (3) survey businesses using a Chamber of Commerce business list; and (4) figure out which businesses are in the city and which are outside its boundaries (it was suggested she contact Downtown Morgantown for assistance). She mentioned possible pilot ideas focused on Sabraton, Evansdale, etc.

In addition, Michelle suggested that the city consider an Ithaca NY model program on "leaf swapping," where neighbors bring bagged leaves to a central spot and those who want them for composting or mulch, take them home. Team members wondered how Ithaca dealt with problems of leaves that might be contaminated by lawn pesticides, etc.

VII. Free Flow Power (FFP) Update. The comment deadline for the FERC final licensing to Free Flow Power (aka Rye Development) is on Monday, November 10. This is regarding the proposal to install hydropower on the Morgantown Dam.

Action: Ella will try to get the comments that the city plans to submit and send out to Green Team to see if the team wants to submit comments as well.

VIII. Green Nights at the Library

- a. **November 19, 6:00pm, Meeting Room A, Public Library:** Thanks to timely input from Ella Belling, Pam Cubberly contacted Rick Landenberger of the WV Land Trust, who has been working with other green space proponents in the city to develop a “Green-Network Plan” for the Morgantown area. The group agreed to sponsor a “Community Dialogue on Green Space” in the open November Green Night slot. Anyone in the community may attend to give their input and ideas, especially “low-hanging fruit” to improve the Morgantown area’s existing network of green space for a variety of benefits: recreation, exercise, nonmotorized commuting, wildlife corridors, etc.
- b. **Proposed Green Nights for Winter-Spring:** *February:* Introduction to community solar co-ops ideally with speakers from the two such coops in WV; *March:* Introduction to composting by Sandra Cress; and *April:* Second Annual Green Households Fair at last Winter Farmer’s Market.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm. Minutes submitted by Pam Cubberly, November 15, 2014.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, December 5, 2014 in City Council Chambers.